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~ Three Paradigms ~
~ Five Approaches ~

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Introduction

On May 4 and 5, 1990 the Job Analysis Advisory Committee (JAAC) of the National Certification Program met to begin creating the Job Analysis Survey. The results of the survey were published in December 1990 in a document called *A National Study of the Profession of Massage Therapy/Bodywork.*

Until now education requirements and testing for competence have often been arbitrarily established, many times by people from other professions or other areas of expertise. The National Certification Program is the first attempt to utilize the expertise already developed within the massage/bodywork community in order to professionally determine the knowledge, skills, and abilities that entry-level practitioners ought to have acquired before entering the health care field.

One of the tasks the JAAC undertook was a complete review and analysis of all the different forms of massage/bodywork currently being practiced in America. This evaluation resulted in the consideration of about one hundred different approaches to hands-on practice, ranging from non-physical contact with the energy field to deep tissue work. The evaluation also included a wide range of bodywork disciplines which incorporate activities such as movement, exercise, nutrition, and bodymind integration in their practice.

The JAAC was made up of practitioners of many different massage/bodywork disciplines. The authors of this essay practice Traditional Massage, Shiatsu Therapy, Anma, AMMA Therapy®, Rolfing®, Chiropractic and Polarity Therapy.

It is the intention of the authors to offer the community a concept which can help us clarify our understanding of the issue of "scope of practice" as it relates both to ourselves and others. Also presented is a conceptual framework that will serve to simplify our understanding of the relationship between the different forms, and levels of practice, of massage/bodywork currently being practiced in the United States. It also respects and supports their wide variety. We hope to encourage discussion and increased cooperation among practitioners and our professional organizations. Your ideas, clarifications and contributions to this evolving effort are welcomed.

Three paradigms[1]

In the last few years several preliminary attempts have been made to clarify the question, "What is the scope of practice of the emerging Massage/Bodywork Profession?". The examination of the JAAC revealed that there are in essence three fundamental mutually inclusive and interrelated paradigms which underlie all forms of massage/bodywork. These three paradigms are called *Relaxation, Remediation and Wholistic.*

The first paradigm, Relaxation, includes the practice of massage/bodywork as a "personal service". This level of practice is based on the well documented human biological need for non-threatening, nurturing touch.[2] This kind of caring touch is non-invasive, relaxing, pleasurable, sensual but not sexual, and stress-reducing. Since the practitioner focuses solely on providing a relaxing massage, there is no need for client assessment. Training must include the basics of anatomy and physiology, knowledge about when to refer to other practitioners and the technical ability to deliver a relaxing, comprehensive, and satisfying massage.

The second paradigm, Remediation, generally encompasses all of the hand-healing approaches which seek the correction of human dysfunction and remediation of human pain. The application of Remediation requires building greatly on the knowledge and skills of the Relaxation paradigm, especially Anatomy and Physiology, and the hand techniques employed. In addition, skills in assessment and evaluation[3] of the client/patient's presenting conditions are required. Practice at this level also requires the ability to design and provide treatment based upon clinical assessment, monitoring and altering one's treatment as appropriate.

The third paradigm, Wholistic, focuses on enhancing, balancing, and transforming the "quality of life" of the recipient. The welcomed byproducts of the Wholistic process are the remediation of symptoms, transformational growth, and the prevention of dis-ease. The symptoms of "dis-ease" are viewed as opportunities for transformation and growth. The Wholistic Paradigm focuses on how the healing, evolution and growth of the body/mind/spirit of the individual is enhanced in an integrated way. "Curing" disease is not the focus. The purpose of this paradigm is to enhance the body/mind/spirit's natural tendency to seek a higher order of function and well being.

Wholistic practitioners have a fundamental understanding of how their unique

approach affects the whole person. Wholistic practitioners may employ a wide range of therapeutic approaches. Every one of these Wholistic approaches, each in its own way, balances systems, which are fundamentally important to the organization, structure, function and well being of the whole person. For example, energy systems are the focus of the Oriental and Energetic disciplines and the myofascial system in its relation to gravity is the focus of Structural Integration®.

The full spectrum of the current practice of massage/bodywork in America forms a series of concentric spheres, nestled one within another, rather like Chinese boxes. These three paradigms of practice meld into one another forming a continuum. Although the stages of practice are distinct, they merge into one another so that their edges overlap. Evolving stages are inclusive. Each paradigm includes all of the possibilities of the preceding stages. This means that massage therapists sometimes do 'relaxation' massages, and practitioners of the Wholistic paradigm sometimes treat symptoms. We do not grow at the expense of losing our prior experience.

The divisions of these three paradigms are related hierarchically and do not oppose each other. In the hands of skilled practitioners various approaches from all three paradigms often overlap and complement each other.

Example

For example, an entry level practitioner may begin purely with the intention to provide a relaxing traditional massage.

With continued study and training, techniques which were originally applied purely with the intent to relax become tools for Remediation, e.g., an athlete who reports pain in the ilio-tibial tract area after a track and field event may be treated with petrissage and friction. At this point the practitioner needs to evaluate to ascertain whether or not the client has a simple muscle spasm, a muscle strain, myofascial inflammation or a lumbar disc problem. S/he will need to determine whether or not to refer to an alternate practitioner or treat the condition him/herself.

Continued study and training allows the practitioner to apply that same technique from a Wholistic perspective. In this case, for example, the practitioner ascertains the fascia lata injury occurs following some disappointing event in the athlete's emotional life that leaves him angry, sad and depressed. Evaluation and assessment reveal spasm of the erector spinae group in the mid-thoracics on the right, as well as tension and tenderness of the right rib cage and shoulder region, a right piriformis spasm, in addition to the tensor fasciae latae strain. Further questioning indicates that during this period the client has been internalizing anger, eats out more, choosing sour and astringent foods, gains weight and loses interest in his exercise program.

Changing from the Remedial focus on a specific injury, the Wholistic paradigm focuses on the entire person, producing an entirely different, and more comprehensive, picture of the situation. After completing the evaluation process, the practitioner may treat the client with the same hand applications used during the Relaxation phase, but might include additional treatment of the general systems under stress, as well as a series of other activities which will expand the client's self-care process, such as nutritional education, emotional release work and other appropriate physical exercises.

It becomes obvious then that different practitioners from different traditions or even different practitioners from the same tradition may practice in one or more of the paradigms at the same time.

Five approaches

A review of all the disciplines which lay claim to being considered part of the massage/bodywork profession reveals five broad categories of practice, each with a common base of core information.

- Traditional Massage
- Contemporary Western Massage/Bodywork
- Structural/Functional/Movement Integration
- Oriental Bodywork
- Energetic Bodywork

The first category, *Traditional Massage*[4] is the form of bodywork based on the five strokes (Effleurage, Petrissage, Friction, Tapotemont, and Vibration) developed by Johann Metzger of Amsterdam in the late nineteenth century. In the United States this work was merged with Pehr Ling's Swedish Movements, and several adjunct modalities[5], to become the well known Swedish Massage of the twentieth century.[6]

The second category is *Contemporary Western Massage/Bodywork*. This category encompasses all of those specialties which are based on the Western sciences, such as NeuroMuscular Massage, Myofascial Release, and Positional Release. The basic nature of these approaches to bodywork is remedial.

The third category is *Structural/Functional/Movement Integration*. The various bodywork and movement techniques that address the human relationship to gravity are encompassed here. While these specialties are clearly contemporary Western approaches, they are distinguished from the second category because of the greater depth and breadth of their underlying philosophy. Here the interaction is with the person as a whole and not on parts or symptoms. Examples are Structural Integration® and Alexander Technique®.

The fourth approach we call *Oriental Bodywork*. The primary focus of treatment is the energy body rather than the physical body, although the physical body is always directly or indirectly affected. This category is comprised of all the different styles of Oriental bodywork which originally developed throughout Asia. Oriental bodywork is distinguished as a separate category because of its derivation from traditional Chinese medicine, as well as its widespread impact on American bodywork. In this category are such forms as Shiatsu, Anma, Amma and Tuina.

Energetic Bodywork is our fifth category. This encompasses all of the other approaches to energetic bodywork that have developed throughout the world, and is comprised of such techniques as Polarity Therapy and Therapeutic Touch.

Common to all five basic approaches to massage/bodywork are both the adjunctive modalities that massage/bodywork practitioners use to assist in their work; and the various systems of the body which are directly, or indirectly, affected by every form of massage/bodywork, to a greater or lesser degree.

When based on appropriate education, adjunctive modalities within the scope of practice of all forms of massage/bodywork are non-invasive. They include, but are not

limited to, pressure devices, application of heat and cold, external application of herbal or chemical preparations, electromagnetic treatment modalities, and education regarding appropriate principles of diet and therapeutic exercise.

Furthermore, all forms of massage/bodywork, regardless of their primary focus, additionally affect the superficial and deep tissues, fascial, myofascial, neuromuscular, musculoskeletal, circulatory, lymphatic, respiratory, digestive, eliminative, and craniosacral systems for the promotion, maintainence, and restoration of health.

The following definitions are proposed for the five approaches to massage/bodywork delineated above.

Traditional Massage

The treatment of the human body by soft tissue manipulation, using the techniques of effleurage, petrissage, friction, tapotement and vibration. This approach is based upon traditional western scientific concepts of anatomy and physiology, for the purposes of general relaxation, health enhancement, rehabilitation of muscular injuries, and enjoyment.

Contemporary Western Massage/Bodywork

The treatment of the human body using a wide variety of manipulative techniques. This approach is based on modern neurological, psychological, somatopsychic, neuromuscular, biomechanical or esoteric concepts of optimal human functioning, and having a broad range of effects including, but not limited to, body/mind/spirit integration, personal growth, physical or emotional relaxation, and the relief of somatic pain or dysfunction.

Structural/Functional/Movement Integration

The treatment of a human body, using a wide variety of manipulative techniques to affect soft tissue (myofasciae), or through reeducation of the nervous and musculoskeletal systems towards more appropriate and balanced patterns of movement behavior and neuromuscular response. This approach is based upon disciplines which organize, balance and integrate the body in gravity as an end in itself, and which consequently may affect a broad range of applications including, but not limited to, body/mind/spirit integration, personal growth, physical or emotional relaxation, and the relief of somatic pain or dysfunction.

Oriental Bodywork

The treatment of the human body, including the electromagnetic or energetic field which surrounds, infuses, and brings that body to life, by pressure and/or manipulation. This approach is based upon traditional Oriental medical principles for assessing and evaluating the energetic system, and traditional Oriental techniques and treatment strategies to primarily affect and balance the energetic system for the purpose of treating the human body, emotions, mind, energy field, and spirit for the promotion, maintainance and restoration of health.

Energetic Bodywork

The treatment of the human body, including the electromagnetic or energetic field which surrounds, infuses, and brings that body to life, by pressure and/or manipulation of the physical body, or the passage, or placement, of the hands in, or through, that energetic field. This approach is based upon Ayurvedic, Eastern or Western esoteric, modern therapeutic, or other recognized and accepted systems of healing, for the purpose of assessing, evaluating, and treating the human body, emotions, mind, energy field, and spirit for the promotion, maintainance and restoration of health. ■

The authors took part in the National Certification Project Job Analysis Advisory Committee which created the survey document used in the Job Analysis. Patricia Benjamin, Raymond Castellino, Jeffery Maitland and Steven Schenkman are members of the National Certification Council.

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References

1. The word "paradigm" will be used in the sense introduced by Thomas Kuhn in *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. "Paradigm" comes from the Greek, *paradeigma* and it means "pattern". A paradigm is: a vision of reality, a highly structured way of valuing, perceiving, and thinking about that reality. The revolutionary creation of Western science, for example, gave rise to the mechanistic paradigm. Through this paradigm we now tend to view all of nature as a machine to be understood according to the principles of causality and articulated in the language of mathematics. We did not always look at reality in this way, and many cultures throughout the world still do not, even though to many Westerners the mechanistic paradigm seems like "common sense".

2. Montagu, A., Touching: the Human Significance of the Skin (NY;Harper and Row, 2nd edition, 1978).

3. Assessment and evaluation, it must be emphasized, are different from "diagnosis" defined as: "The determination of the nature of disease". Diagnosis is the work of the Physician (i.e. Doctor, Chiropractor, Osteopath, etc.), and not within the scope of the massage/bodywork practitioner. Assessment and evaluation of the energetic, musculoskeletal and myofascial condition of patient/clients, as well as of such factors as Qi stagnation, muscular tonus, pain, range of motion, etc, is a necessary prerequisite to the application of any scientific system of treatment, and is required to design appropriate treatment strategies, or to know when to refer to more appropriate practitioners.

4. The historical practice of massage in America, as well as the current popular understanding of 'massage' is, requires us to recognize this approach to bodywork as a separate category.

5. Modality refers to the accessory tools that we use in addition to our primary tool—our hands. Disciplines are the different approaches to massage/bodywork that are practised in our culture.

6. For a more in depth treatment of this subject please see Patricia Benjamin;"Is it Effleurage or Strykning?": Comments on the Notations by Pehr Ling, *Massage Therapy Journal*, Winter 1987.